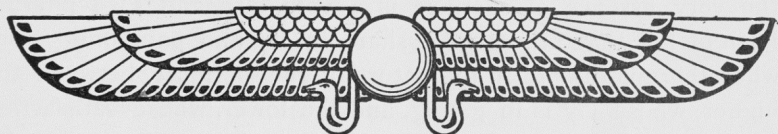


*"Point out the 'Way'—However dimly, and lost among the host as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness."*



# MERCURY.

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## THE LAW OF SACRIFICE.

[A CHAPTER IN ANNIE BESANT'S FORTHCOMING WORK, "THE ANCIENT WISDOM."]

THE study of the "Law of Sacrifice" follows naturally on the study of the Law of Karma, and the understanding of the former, it was once remarked by a Master, is as necessary for the world as the understanding of the latter. By an act of Self-sacrifice the LOGOS became manifest for the emanation of the universe, by sacrifice the universe is maintained, and by sacrifice man reaches perfection.\* Hence every religion that springs from the Ancient Wisdom has sacrifice as a central teaching, and some of the profoundest truths of occultism are rooted in the Law of Sacrifice.

An attempt to grasp, however feebly, the nature of the sacrifice of the LOGOS may prevent us from falling into the very general mistake that sacrifice is an essentially painful thing; whereas,

\*The Hindu will remember the opening words of the BRIHADARANYAKOPANISHAD, that the dawn is in sacrifice; the Zoroastrian will recall how Ahura-Mazdâo came forth from an act of sacrifice; the Christian will think of the Lamb—the symbol of the LOGOS—slain from the foundation of the world.

the very essence of sacrifice is a voluntary and glad pouring forth of life that others may share in it; and pain only arises when there is discord in the nature of the sacrificer, between the higher, whose joy is in giving, and the lower, whose satisfaction lies in grasping and in holding. It is that discord alone that introduces the element of pain, and in the supreme Perfection, in the LOGOS, no discord could arise; the One is the perfect chord of Being, of infinite melodious concords, all tuned to a single note, in which Life and Wisdom and Bliss are blended into one keynote of Existence.

The sacrifice of the LOGOS lay in His voluntarily circumscribing His infinite life in order that he might manifest. Symbolically, in the infinite ocean of light with center everywhere and with circumference nowhere, there arises a full-orbed sphere of living light, a LOGOS, and the surface of that sphere is His will to limit Himself that He may become manifest, His veil† in which He encloses Himself that within it a universe may take form. That for which the sacrifice is made is not yet in existence; its future being lies in the "thought" of the LOGOS alone; to Him it owes its conception and will owe its manifold life. Diversity could not arise in the "partless Brahman" save for this voluntary sacrifice of Deity taking on Himself form in order to emanate myriad forms, each dowered with a spark of His life and therefore with the power of evolving into His image. "The primal sacrifice that causes the birth of beings is named action (Karma)" it is said;‡ and this coming forth into activity from the bliss of the perfect repose of self-existence has ever been recognized as the sacrifice of the LOGOS. That sacrifice continues throughout the term of the universe, for the life of the LOGOS is the sole support of every separated "life," and He limits His life in each of the myriad forms to which He gives birth, bearing all the restraints and limitations implied in each form. From any one of these He could burst forth at any moment, the infinite Lord, filling the universe with His glory; but only by sublime patience and slow

†This is the Self-limiting power of the Logos, His Mâyâ, the limiting principle by which all forms are brought forth. His Life appears as "Spirit," His Mâyâ as "Matter," and these are never disjoined during manifestation.

‡Bhagavad Gītâ, viii., 3.



and gradual expansion can each form be led upward until it becomes a self-dependent centre of boundless power like Himself. Therefore does He cabin Himself in forms, and bear all imperfections till perfection is attained, till His creature is like unto Himself and one with Him, but with its own thread of memory. Thus this pouring out of His life into forms is part of the original sacrifice, and has in it the bliss of the eternal Father sending forth his offspring as separated lives, that each may evolve an identity that shall never perish, and yield its own note blended with all others to swell the eternal song of bliss, intelligence and life. This marks the essential nature of sacrifice, whatever other elements may become mixed with the central idea; it is the voluntary pouring out of life that others may partake of it, to bring others into life and to sustain them in it till they become self-dependent, and this is but one expression of Divine joy. There is always joy in the exercise of activity which is the expression of the power of the actor; the bird takes joy in the outpouring of song, and quivers with the mere rapture of the singing; the painter rejoices in the creation of his genius, in the putting into form of his idea; the essential activity of divine life must lie in giving, for there is nothing higher than itself from which it can receive; if it is to be active at all—and manifested life *is* active motion—it must pour itself out. Hence the sign of the spirit is giving, for spirit is the active divine life in every form.

But the essential activity of matter, on the other hand, lies in receiving; by receiving life-impulses it is organized into forms; by receiving them these are maintained; on their withdrawal they fall to pieces. All its activity is of this nature of receiving, and only by receiving can it endure as a form. Therefore is it always grasping, clinging, seeking to hold for its own; the persistence of the form depends on its grasping and retentive power, and it will, therefore, seek to draw into itself all it can and will grudge every fraction with which it parts. Its joy will be in seizing and holding; to it giving is like courting death.

It is very easy, from this standpoint, to see how the notion arose that sacrifice was suffering. While the divine life found its delight in exercising its activity of giving, and even when em-

bodied in form cared not if the form perished by the giving, knowing it to be only its passing expression and the means of its separate growth; the form which felt its life-forces pouring away from it cried out in anguish, and sought to exercise its activity in holding, thus resisting the outward flow. The sacrifice diminished the life-energies the form claimed as its own, or even entirely drained them away, leaving the form to perish. In the lower world of form this was the only aspect of sacrifice cognizable, and the form found itself driven to the slaughter, and cried out in fear and agony. What wonder that men, blinded by form, identified sacrifice with the agonizing form instead of with the free life that gave itself, crying gladly: "Lo! I come to do thy will, O God; I am content to do it." Nay, what wonder that men—conscious of a higher and a lower nature, and oft identifying their self-consciousness more with the lower than with the higher—felt the struggles of the lower nature, the form, as their own struggles, and felt that *they* were accepting suffering in resignation to a higher will, and regarded sacrifice as that devout and resigned acceptance of pain. Not until man identifies himself with the life instead of with the form can the element of pain in sacrifice be gotten rid of. In a perfectly harmonized entity, pain cannot be, for the form is then the perfect vehicle of the life, receiving or surrendering with ready accord. With the ceasing of struggle comes the ceasing of pain. For suffering arises from jar, from friction, from antagonistic movements, and where the whole nature works in perfect harmony, the conditions that give rise to suffering are not present.

The law of sacrifice being thus the law of life-evolution in the universe, we find every step in the ladder is accomplished by sacrifice—the life pouring itself out to take birth in a higher form, while the form that contained it perishes. Those who look only at the perishing forms see Nature as a vast charnal-house; while those who see the deathless soul escaping to take new and higher forms hear ever the joyous song of birth from the upward-springing life.

The Monad in the mineral kingdom evolves by the breaking up of its forms for the production and support of plants. Min-

erals are disintegrated that plant forms may be built out of their materials; the plant draws from the soil its nutritive constituents, breaks them up, and incorporates them into its own substance. The mineral forms perish that the plant forms may grow, and this law of sacrifice stamped on the mineral kingdom is the law of the evolution of life and form. The life passes onward, and the Monad evolves to produce the vegetable kingdom, the perishing of the lower forms being the condition for the appearing and the support of the higher.

The story is repeated in the vegetable kingdom, for its forms in turn are sacrificed in order that animal forms may be produced and may grow; on every side grasses, grains, trees, perish for the sustenance of animal bodies; their tissues are disintegrated that the materials comprising them may be assimilated by the animal and build up its body. Again, the law of sacrifice is stamped on the world, this time on the vegetable kingdom; its life evolves while its forms perish; the Monad evolves to produce the animal kingdom, and the forms are offered up that animal forms may be brought forth and may be maintained.

So far the idea of pain has scarcely connected itself with that of sacrifice, for, as we have seen in the course of our studies, the astral bodies of plants are not sufficiently organized to give rise to any acute sensations, either of pleasure or of pain. But as we consider the law of sacrifice in its working in the animal kingdom, we cannot avoid the recognition of the pain there involved in the breaking up of forms. It is true that the amount of pain caused by the preying of one animal upon another in "the state of nature" is comparatively trivial in each case, but still some pain occurs. It is also true that man, in the part he has played in helping to evolve animals, has much aggravated the amount of pain, and has strengthened instead of diminishing the predatory instincts of carnivorous animals; still, he did not implant those instincts, though he took advantage of them for his own purposes, and innumerable varieties of animals, with the evolution of which man has had directly nothing to do, prey upon each other, the forms being sacrificed to the support of other forms as in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms. The struggle for existence

went on long before man appeared on the scene, and accelerated the evolution alike of life and of form, while the pains accompanying the destruction of forms began their long task of impressing on the evolving Monad the transitory nature of all forms, and the difference between the forms that perished and the life that persisted.

The lower nature of man was evolved under the same law of sacrifice as ruled in the lower kingdoms. But, with the outpouring of divine Life which gave the human Monad, came a change in the way in which the law of sacrifice worked as the law of life. In man was to be developed the will, the self-moving, self-initiated energy; therefore the compulsion which forced the lower kingdoms along the path of evolution could not be employed in his case, without paralyzing the growth of this new and essential power. No mineral, no plant, no animal was asked to accept the law of sacrifice as a voluntarily chosen law of life. It was imposed on them from without, and it forced their growth by a necessity from which they could not escape. Man was to have the freedom of choice necessary for the growth of a discriminative and self-conscious intelligence, and the question arose: "How can this creature be left free to choose, and yet learn to choose to follow the law of sacrifice, while yet he is a sensitive organism, shrinking from pain, and pain is inevitable in the breaking up of sentient forms?"

Doubtless æons of experience, studied by a creature becoming ever more intelligent, might have finally led man to discover that the law of sacrifice is the fundamental law of life; but in this, as in so much else, he was not left to his own unassisted efforts. Divine Teachers were there at the side of man in his infancy, and they authoritatively proclaimed the law of sacrifice, and incorporated it in a most elementary form in the religions by which They trained the dawning intelligence of man. It would have been useless to have suddenly demanded from these child-souls that they should surrender without return what seemed to them to be the most desirable objects, the objects on the possession of which their life in form depended. They must be lead along a path which would lead gradually to the heights of voluntary self-

sacrifice. To this end they were first taught that they were not isolated units, but were part of a larger whole, and that their lives were linked to other lives, both above and below them. Their physical lives were supported by lower lives, by the earth, by plants; they consumed these, and in thus doing they contracted a debt which they were bound to pay. Living on the sacrificed lives of others, they must sacrifice, in turn, something which should support other lives; they must nourish even as they were nourished; taking the fruits produced by the activity of the astral entities that guide physical Nature, they must recruit the expended forces by suitable offerings. Hence have arisen all the sacrifices to these forces—as science calls them—to these intelligences guiding physical order, as religions have always taught. As fire quickly disintegrates the dense physical, it quickly restored the etheric particles of the burnt offering to the ethers; thus the astral particles were easily set free to be assimilated by the astral entities concerned with the fertility of the earth and the growth of plants. Thus the wheel of production was kept turning, and man learned that he was constantly incurring debts to Nature which he must as constantly discharge. Thus the sense of obligation was implanted and nurtured in his mind, and the duty that he owed to the whole, to the nourishing mother Nature, became impressed on his thought. It is true that this sense of obligation was closely connected with the idea that its discharge was necessary for his own welfare, and that the wish to continue to prosper moved him to the payment of his debt. He was but a child-soul, learning his first lessons, and this lesson of the interdependence of lives, of the life of each depending on the sacrifice of others, was of vital importance to his growth. Not yet could he feel the divine joy of giving; the reluctance of the form to surrender aught that nourished it had first to be overcome, and sacrifice became identified with this surrender of something valued, a surrender made from a sense of obligation and the desire to continue prosperous.

The next lesson removed the reward of sacrifice to a region beyond the physical world. First, by a sacrifice of material goods material welfare was to be secured. Then, the sacrifice of mate-



rial goods was to bring enjoyment in heaven, on the other side of death. The reward of the sacrificer was of a higher kind, and he learned that the relatively permanent might be secured by the sacrifice of the relatively transient—a lesson that was important as leading to discriminative knowledge. The clinging of the form to physical objects was exchanged for a clinging to heavenly joys. In all exoteric religions we find this educative process resorted to by the Wise Ones—too wise to expect from child-souls the virtue of unrewarded heroism, and content, with a sublime patience, to coax their wayward charges slowly along a pathway that was a thorny and a stony one to the lower nature. Gradually men were induced to subjugate the body, to overcome its sloth, by the regular daily performance of religious rites, often burdensome in their nature, and to regulate its activities by directing them into useful channels; they were trained to conquer the form and to hold it in subjection to the life, and to accustom the body to yield itself to works of goodness and charity in obedience to the demands of the mind, even while that mind was chiefly stimulated by a desire to enjoy reward in heaven. We can see among the Hindus, the Persians, the Chinese, how men were taught to recognize their manifold obligations; to make the body yield dutiful sacrifice of obedience and reverence to ancestors, to parents, to elders; to bestow charity with courtesy; and to show kindness to all. Slowly men were helped to evolve both heroism and self-sacrifice to a high degree, as witness the martyrs who joyfully flung their bodies to torture and death rather than deny their faith or be false to their creed. They looked indeed for a "crown of glory," in heaven as a recompense for the sacrifice of physical form, but it was much to have overcome the clinging to that physical form, and to have made the invisible world so real that it outweighed the visible.

The next step was achieved when the sense of duty was definitely established, when the sacrifice of the lower to the higher was seen to be "right," apart from all question of a reward to be received in another world, when the obligation owed by the part to the whole was recognized, and the yielding of service by the form that existed by the service of others was felt to be justly

due without any claim to wages being established thereby. Then man began to perceive the law of sacrifice as the law of life, and to voluntarily associate himself with it; and he began to learn to disjoin himself in idea from the form he dwelt in and to identify himself with the evolving life. This gradually led him to feel a certain indifference to all the activities of form, save as they consisted in "duties that ought to be done," and to regard all of them as mere channels for the life activities that were due to the world, and not as activities performed by him with any desire for their results. Thus he reached the point already noted, when Karma attracting him to the three worlds ceased to be generated, and he turned the wheel of existence because it ought to be turned, and not because its revolution brought any desirable object to himself.

The full recognition of the law of sacrifice, however, lifts man beyond the mental plane—whereon duty is recognized as duty, as "what ought to be done because it is owed"—to that higher plane of Buddhi where all selves are felt as one, and where all activities are poured out for the use of all, and not for the gain of a separated self. Only on that plane is the law of sacrifice *felt* as a joyful privilege, instead of only recognized intellectually as true and just. On the Buddhist plane man clearly sees that life is one, that it streams out perpetually as the free outpouring of the love of the LOGOS, that life holding itself separate is a poor and a mean thing at best, and an ungrateful one to boot. There the whole heart rushes upward to the LOGOS in one strong surge of love and worship, and gives itself in joyfulest self-surrender to be a channel of His life and love to the world. To be a carrier of His light, a messenger of His compassion, a worker in His realm—that appears as the only life worth living; to hasten human evolution, to serve the Good Law, to lift part of the heavy burden of the world—that seems to be the very gladness of the Lord Himself.

From this plane only can a man act as one of the saviours of the world, because on it he is one with the selves of all. Identified with humanity where it is one, his strength, his love, his life, can flow downwards into any or into every separated self. He

has become a spiritual force, and the available spiritual energy of the world-system is increased by the pouring into it his life. The forces he used to expend on the physical, astral and mental planes, seeking things for his separated self, are now gathered all up in one act of sacrifice, and, transmuted thereby into spiritual energy, they pour down upon the world as spiritual life. This transmutation is wrought by the motive, which determines the plane on which the energy is set free. If a man's motive be the gain of physical objects, the energy liberated works only on the physical plane; if he desire astral objects, he liberates energy on the astral plane; if he seeks mental joys, his energy functions on the mental plane; but if he sacrifice himself to be a channel of the LOGOS, he liberates energy on the spiritual plane, and it works everywhere with the potency and keenness of a spiritual force. For such a man action and inaction are the same; for he does everything while doing nothing, he does nothing while doing everything. For him, high and low, great and small are the same; he fills any place that needs filling, and the LOGOS is alike in every place and in every action. He can flow into any form, he can work along any line, he knows not any longer choice or difference; his life by sacrifice has been made one with the life of the LOGOS—he sees God in everything and everything in God. How then can place or form make to him any difference? he no longer identifies himself with form, but is self-conscious Life. "Having nothing, he possesseth all things;" asking for nothing, everything flows into him. His life is bliss, for he is one with his Lord who is Beatitude; and, using form for service without attachment to it, "he has put an end to pain."

Those who grasp something of the wonderful possibilities which open out before us as we voluntarily associate ourselves with the law of sacrifice will wish to begin that voluntary association long ere they can rise to the heights just dimly sketched. Like other deep spiritual truths it is eminently practical in its application to daily life, and none who feel its beauty need hesitate to begin to work with it. When a man resolves to begin the practice of sacrifice he will train himself to open every day with an act of sacrifice, the offering of himself, ere the day's

work begins, to Him to whom he gives his life; his first waking thought will be this dedication of all his power to his Lord. Then each thought, each word, each action in daily life will be done as a sacrifice—not for its fruit, not even as duty, but as the way in which, at the moment, his Lord can be served. All that comes will be accepted as the expression of His will; joys, troubles, anxieties, successes, failures, all to him are welcome as marking out his path of service; he will take each happily as it comes and offer it as a sacrifice; he will lose each happily as it goes, since its going shows that his Lord has no longer need for it. Any powers he has he gladly uses for service; when they fail him, he takes their failure with happy equanimity; since they are no longer available he cannot give them. Even suffering that springs from past causes not yet exhausted can be changed into a voluntary sacrifice by welcoming it; taking possession of it by willing it, a man may offer it as a gift, changing it by this motive into a spiritual force. Every human life offers countless opportunities for this practice of the law of sacrifice, and every human life becomes a power as these opportunities are seized and utilized. Without any expansion of his waking consciousness, a man may thus become a worker on the spiritual planes, liberating energy there which pours down into the lower worlds. His self-surrender here in the lower consciousness, imprisoned as it is in the body, calls out responsive thrills of life from the Buddhic aspect of the Monad which is his true Self, and hastens the time when that Monad shall become the spiritual Ego, self-moved and ruling all his vehicles, using each of them at will as needed for the work that is to be done. In no way can progress be made so rapidly, and the manifestation of all the powers latent in the Monad be brought about so quickly, as by the understanding and the practice of the law of sacrifice. Therefore was it called by a Master "The law of evolution for the man." It has indeed profounder and more mystic aspects than any touched on here, but these will unveil themselves without words to the patient and loving heart whose life is all a sacrificial offering. There are things that are heard only in stillness; there are teachings the can be uttered only by "The Voice of the Silence." Among these are the deeper truths rooted in the law of sacrifice.

ANNIE BESANT.

## SCIENTIFIC CORROBORATIONS OF THE- OSOPHY.

### Astronomy.\*

New astronomical discoveries are also fast accumulating on lines that agree with the "Secret Doctrine." Among these we find the study of the planet Mars, and, more recently still, the magnificent observations of Venus and Mercury (see *Atlantic Monthly*, March-April, 1897), by some promising American astronomers, Percival Lowell, Pickering, Douglas, etc., whereby a much better knowledge of these planets is being obtained.

According to the esoteric teachings, Mars is somewhat older than the Earth, and must have been inhabited by a highly intellectual, superior and much more civilized humanity than ours, about whom the earlier Aryan scientists and adepts "seem to have known far more" than our modern anthropologists know about the early stages of our own Earth (S. D. II. 699). Only the men of Mars *were* more ethereal than we are (S. D. I, 602), using here the past tense, because, according to Theosophy, Mars is now in obscurity (S. D. I. 165), that is to say in a period of evolution, when animal life is dormant, previous to the manifestation of higher forms. At any rate, our scientists now say that Mars has no seas, and water only around the poles during the summer periods, but that it is covered by fields, whose dense vegetation, formerly taken to be seas, is sustained by the waters derived from the melting of the polar snows and distributed by a gigantic system or network of apparently artificial and geometrically-disposed canals, 183 of which have been photographed, together with 45 immense round artificial lakes into which many canals evidently converge. Some of these canals are known to duplicate themselves during the summers of the planet, showing that provision even had been made to collect the excess of melted snows in order to help the fertilization of the arid portions of the planet.† All this necessarily postulates the existence on Mars

\* A Chapter from a new and amplified edition of this work, now in the Press, by MERCURY PUBLISHING CO. Price, 15 cents

† A very good map and views of these canals were published in the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN Feb. 29, 1896.



of races capable of gigantic efforts, conducted with high intelligence, and presupposes also the gradual transformation, through old age, of the planet itself, bringing on terrible droughts (S. D. II. 503 *a*). How near science is coming to the mysterious, but sacred and unrevealable connection that occultism affirms between Mars and the Earth!

But the study of Venus and Mercury has just brought out results more startling still, showing that the conditions of those two planets, through exceeding old age, are such that no humanity, as we now know it, could live on either. They both rotate around the Sun in such a manner that the same side, the same half sphere of both is constantly turned and exposed to the Sun's light and heat, while the other side never receives a single ray from it; this must, therefore, produce on one side of both those planets, an eternal day, with an inexorable, intense state of heat, and on the other side eternal night, with the most intense cold. The same condition obtains, as we know, with our Moon; but, owing to the attractive action of the Earth, our satellite turns one same side to us and not to the Sun, so that, although she may be "dead" (a mystery, as H. P. B. says) yet her physical conditions must be preferable to those reigning on Venus and Mercury. However, through Mr. P. Lowell's studies, we now get a new idea of planetary conditions, as follows:

VERY OLD—"far older than the Earth," S. D. I. 155, II. 33)  
*Mercury, Venus and Moon:*

Length of Solar Day on one side and of night on the other, *infinite*; color, Venus, *straw* (half death); the two others *white* and *black*, with chiaroscuro (material death);

OLD—*Mars* and the *Earth*:

Length of Solar Day, 24 h. 39½ m. and 24 h.; color, *ochre* and *blue-green*, hues of vegetation and life, but the predominant ochre in Mars showing greater age;

YOUNG—*Jupiter* and *Saturn*:

Length of Solar Day, 9 h. 55 and 10 h. 14; color, *brick-red* under their clouds, incandescent heat glow;

UNKNOWN—*Uranus* and *Neptune*:

Day probably rapid; color *pale-green*.

This scientific statement of their relative age capsizes the old Astronomical Theory of the formation of the planets through the successive annular segmentation of a solar nebula; for the farthest would then necessarily be the oldest, and the closest to the Sun the youngest; but it does not disagree with Theosophic knowledge, quite the contrary. However, it must be mentioned here that the astronomers of the old and conservative school are greatly worried about Mr. Lowell's discoveries and conclusions, and are fully prepared to deny them, for the mere purpose of preventing the upsetting of old favorite theories about the similarity of motions and length of day among all the planets, etc. But it may be to Mr. Lowell's satisfaction to know that—although his new facts about the inferior planets must destroy the former astronomical speculations about the animal life, probable or possible, on those planets—yet they do agree most beautifully with the hints of our "Secret Doctrine."

Thus, on Mercury, who has long been dormant, physically, and is just "getting out of Pralaya" (S. D. I. 165)—probably beginning its 7th Round—the men are *immortal* (S. D. II. 44), that is to say, progressed far above our present mortal bodily conditions, and, consequently, able to live under physical conditions of their planet which would be unbearable to us.

Of Venus, Mr. Lowell says "we gaze on a world which has run its course, and is left motionless, changeless, dead;" the S. D. says she is in her *last* Round (I. 165), therefore *dying*, after which she will cease to be visible on our plane (I. 153), and she is now probably beginning to prepare for transferring her soul and life to her offspring and successor, to which she will afterwards act as a Moon. But how much better can we now understand, through Mr. Lowell's observations, what occult teachings meant by Venus "being the little Sun, in which the solar orb *stores* his light (S. D. II. 24), receiving *twice* as much light and heat as our globe" (II. 28) (since there is no night on the illumined side); and that out of this supply, she sends the earth one-third, and has two parts left to herself (II. 29), whereby she is our light-bearer, physically and mystically (II. 33); every change on *Sukra* (Venus) is felt and reflected by the Earth (II. 31), Venus, the

"occult-sister and alter-ego of our globe" (I. 305) changing simultaneously with our changes, on account of having "adopted the Earth, progeny of the Moon, who had *overgrown* her parent and given much trouble." (II. 32.) We must admit that, in her present stage, Venus, does receive more light and heat, and through her constant opposition to the Sun, must store it up, so that, while reflecting some to us, must keep more than her share; and from her advanced stage of evolution, we can also understand how, "in spite of her closer proximity to the sun, Venus is less dense than the Earth," (I. 593) because her "matter," "in its last Round," must have grown more ethereal than ours in our 4th Round. At the same time, her humanity must also have grown to such a status as to be physically indifferent to the material conditions of their planet, which would be unendurable to us. We must also remember that "the Earth is passing through its habitable phase, ONLY for the *present order* of things, and as far as our present mankind is concerned with its actual 'coats of skin,' and phosphorus for brains and bones," (S. D., II. 72) while Theosophy asserts that there is life everywhere; suitable life to suitable environments. But from what is shown us by our Moon, Venus and Mercury, we may realize that, in their old age, planets gradually change their rotation so as to keep only one same half-side constantly turned towards the Sun; therefore, so it will happen to our Earth at some due period of her future Rounds at which time, "Mother-Water will again arise and disappear." (II. 64) This, however, is admitted by science, since the studies of J. C. Adams, Helmholtz and Darwin, who assert that "tidal friction must gradually, but inexorably, lengthen our day to a month, and then to a year, when our Earth will also present one same side eternally to the Sun." Therefore, as says Dr. H. S. Williams in *Harper* (March 1897) "modern calculations, based on inexorable tidal friction, suffice to revolutionize the views formerly current as to the stability of the planetary system. The 18th-century mathematician looked upon this system as a vast celestial machine, which had been in existence about 6,000 years, and which was destined to run on forever. The analysts of to-day compute both the past and the future of this system in millions

instead of thousands of years, yet feel well assured that the solar system offers no contradiction to those laws of growth and decay, which everywhere seem to represent the immutable order of nature." No Theosophist could have expressed better the occult views of Kosmic evolution, in which Sun is to follow Sun, at regular intervals separated by necessary rests, as explained in H. P. B.'s "Secret Doctrine." Thus science also comes to agree with Theosophy about the old biblical fallacy of "unmovable, unchangeable and eternal as the heavens," which must be replaced by the idea of eternal life and its concomitant decay,—motion and evolution—everywhere.

And this grander conception by Theosophy of evolutionary laws, embracing the whole Kosmos, is daily verified by the recent researches and discoveries in the Milky Way and the Nebular Systems. The new information has been condensed by Mr. J. N. Lockyer into the so-called "meteoric hypothesis," which, except on minor details, is absolutely Theosophical. This theory, enlarged by the knowledge obtained, through the spectroscope, of the various stages of development and the various motions of the diverse stellar bodies, leads modern astronomers to admit that "the growth of a star starts from a nebular gas (Lava center and Cosmic dust of S. D.), condensing gradually into a self-luminous star, which passes on to a condition in which it is only capable of reflecting foreign light, and finally it becomes a dark, invisible body—the culminating and final stage of cosmic existence of which is disintegration, either by the slow action of the natural forces, or by collision with other stellar masses," as Dr. Croll imagines. "Such collisions may be long delayed, the dark star may be drawn in a comet-like circuit about thousands of stellar masses, before it chances to collide, but that matters not—*billions are the units in the arithmetic of Eternity* (just as the S. D. teaches)—and, sooner or later, a collision must occur, and the mutual impact must shatter both colliding bodies into vapor, or vapor combined with meteoric fragments, in short, into a veritable nebula, the matrix of future worlds; thus the dark star, which is the last term of one series of cosmic change, becomes the first of another." (*Harper, ibid*) All this, as a whole, and bar-

ring some fanciful interludes, agrees so fully with H. P. B.'s teachings (S. D. I. 144, 155, 200, 201, etc.) that it will be excusable to continue the quotation from *Harper's* 'Astronomical Progress of the Century': "In this extended view, nebulae and luminous stars are but the infantile and adolescent stages of the life-history of the cosmic individual; the dark star its adult stage or time of true virility (time of decrepitude say we). Or one may think of the shrunken dark star as the germ-cell, the pollen-grain of the cosmic organism; reduced in size, as becomes a germ-cell, to a mere fraction of the nebular body from which it sprang, it yet retains within its seemingly non-vital body, all the potentialities of the original organism, and requires only to blend with a fellow-cell to bring a new generation into being. Thus may the cosmic race, whose aggregate census makes up the stellar universe, be perpetuated—individual solar systems, such as ours, being born and growing old and dying to *live again in their descendants*, while the Universe, as a whole, maintains its unified integrity throughout all these internal mutations, passing on, it may be, by infinitesimal stages, to a culmination hopelessly beyond human comprehension," and yet, which Theosophy alone can and does compass satisfactorily.

Now, if we compare all of the above quotation with the nebular theory in the S. D. (I. 588 to 600) we may well ask whether, with the addition of the idea of intelligent forces, or Kosmic rulers, back of sidereal life, the views expressed in *Harper's* are not pure occult teachings, although written by a man who evidently knows nothing of Theosophy? And what would not our astronomers accomplish, if they only allowed themselves to be guided by our occult inferences? But many other new astronomical theories are falling into line with H. P. B.'s teachings, and we can rapidly enumerate a few of them.

A.—FIRST ABOUT GRAVITATION.—All readers of S. D. must remember the intensely interesting, though extremely sarcastic remarks of H. P. B. in the chapter dedicated to it (I. 527 to 589, and other parts noted in the Index), which brought against her virulent denunciation by the first reviewer of her master work, as well as of *Isis Unveiled*. Now, at the beginning of the present year,



Dr. St. H. Emmens sent to various scientific bodies a startling assault on Newton's famous and so-far sacred law of gravitation—as understood by his successors—whereby he promulgates an “astonishing theory of natural law, boldly assailing the recognized gravitation law and calling upon scientists to reform their belief in order to square the accepted theory with stubborn facts” which gravitation alone cannot explain (*N. Y. Herald*, Feb. 3, 1897). Dr. Emmen's theory seems principally based on the idea of centrifugal force as a parallel force to gravitation and this may be incomplete, specious or hazardous, especially since (poor man!) he wants to deny Ether which he calls a “fantastic fetch(!)” but his attack on accepted science shows that there is a growing unconscious tendency to turn towards new ideas, as suggested in the S. D., and proves that occult theories are insensibly but surely spreading.

B.—ABOUT THE MOON.—It was the universal consensus of astronomers that the Earth was the parent of the Moon, this later having been separated, thrown off from the Earth; and official science sneered at the contrary fact asserted in S. D. (I, 156, 149, note, 415, II, 64). But now comes Mr. W. J. Lynn, F. R. A. S., boldly writing on scientific deductions, that, “however much it may surprise some of his readers, the Moon is *not* a satellite of of the Earth; but must be looked upon a *companion planet* to it, accompanying our planet in its annual journey around the Sun, the two mutually perturbing each other's motions,” just as H. P. B. said of the Moon acting “like a mother who walks round and round her child's cradle, keeping watch over the infant,” (S. D. I. 180) and the singular fact—that the pretended rulership or action of the Earth over the Moon, is really limited to just enough physical attraction for producing a circular motion (S. D. I. 16)—is further confirmed by the above writer stating that the Sun exerts on the Moon double the attraction of the Earth, whereby if the Moon's motion in space was suddenly stopped, she would fall *to the sun* and not to the Earth, as was generally supposed (*Astronomy made Easy*, Lloyd Weekly, Aug. 23, 1896). A. MARQUES.

... Make thy calculations, Lanco, if thou wouldst learn the correct age of thy small wheel. Its fourth spoke is our Mother. Reach the fourth fruit of the fourth path of knowledge that leads to Nirvana, and thou shalt comprehend, for thou shalt see.

## THE FORUM DEPARTMENT.

Any person can send questions, answers to questions, opinions, and notes upon Theosophical subjects. When necessary, the various communications will be condensed by the editor. Be careful to write only on one side of the paper.

### QUESTION CCCLXIII.

3. *Is the injunction of "Light on the Path" "to kill out desire of comfort" altogether rational?*

A.F.—Not if it is understood too literally or without qualification. Extremes are always misleading, and usually wrong.

The exactions of the body depend partly on climate and social environment, partly on the constitution and health of the particular individual. They are all, of course, Karmic, and none can be defied. If, for instance, an individual is peculiarly sensitive to cold, to dark rooms, or to a hard chair, the constant struggle to disregard the weakness would merely result in a large expenditure of force wastefully, and the mind, distracted by bodily discomfort, could not do useful work. It would be easier and more remunerative to simply provide the needed comfort and set the mind free for more important function. For the essential thing is *to set the mind free!* and this can only be done by either abolishing the bodily need or providing for it; if abolition is impossible under existing conditions, provision is the alternative.

This is not saying that luxurious habits are philosophical. On the contrary, they do *not* set the mind free, but concentrate it on the luxuries, occupy it with anticipation and realization, and stimulate it to new desires. To foster a taste for sybaritic living is to produce precisely the same result as to resist a need for moderate comfort, namely, to prevent the mind from being free; extremes meeting in this case as in others. The true desideratum would seem, in food and clothes and surroundings, to be a measure of excellence full enough to satisfy instinctive cravings, and yet not so full as to call attention to itself—in other words, that measure of excellence which avoids an appeal to the mind through either defect or excess. If the body is not stirred up in either way; its quiescence allows full play to the mental faculty.

It is doubtless the fact that there comes a time in occult training when physical discipline is imperative for the entire subjugation of the body to the higher principles. Such asceticism is a necessary means to a necessary end, and it is, of course, conducted upon scientific principles and under competent guides. But so, too, there comes a time where the mind itself has to be subjected to analogous discipline, for it also is but an agent and a low one. These two disciplines pertain, however, to a stage in advance of ours, and their attempted application now would be premature if not impossible. And yet some preparation for them in a minor way would seem fitting, and it is, indeed, enjoined on students of elementary Esotericism. They are told to cultivate purity and temperance, and to train the mind to one-pointedness. These are things which any one may strive after, and some degree of them is necessitated to any man who has merely temporal ends to gain. A larger measure is obligatory on him who is taking the first steps towards the Occult portal, and complete achievement must be had beyond it. There, more stringent prescriptions and exactions inevitably have place, as we can readily see. Only the underlying principle of them, not their liberal injunction, is applicable to ourselves.

And so "Kill out desire of comfort, as "Kill out ambition," and "Kill out desire for life," is the embodiment of a truth in the evolutionary discipline of an advanced pupil, not a maxim for beginners, not a practicable direction for even earnest souls still in social life and with Karma-burdened frames, not an obligation wherein failure means reproach; not a temperate or commendable or even rational prescription if addressed to men and women who are not chelas; but entirely so in its application to those who have reached the plane of recognized discipleship, and equally so if regarded as stating a condition to high spiritual evolution rather than a rule for that evolution in its incipience. Occultism is not less common-sense than Theosophy which is its preliminary, and it takes note of facts and requirements and possibilities just as truly as does any one of the secular sciences which plume themselves on their practicality. Sometimes its expounders use language somewhat extravagant, and then they have to be tuned down like any other writers.

QUESTIONS TO BE DEALT WITH IN THE NEXT AND SUBSEQUENT  
ISSUES OF THE FORUM.

1. *In the May number of MERCURY it is said that the precessional year starts in its Cancer month. How does the writer figure this out, and what are his authorities?*

2. *In an article by H. P. B., in Vahan No 1, occurs the following: "Unless we succeed in placing the T. S. before this date (1897-98) on the safe side of the spiritual current, it will be swept away into the deep called 'Failure,' and the cold waves of oblivion will close over its doomed head." What is to be understood by this, are the Masters still working with the Society, or have they already withdrawn their help?*

3. *To what extent—if at all—does Theosophy accept the doctrine of Heredity, or how could Heredity agree with Karma?*

Answers should be sent in as soon as possible.

## T. S. ECHOES.

### ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE AMERICAN SECTION THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

#### The General Secretary's Report.

##### BRETHREN OF THE CONVENTION:

The opening words of any report are naturally of greeting and felicitation. In the case of this, the report made to the Eleventh Convention of the Theosophical Society in America, otherwise known as the American Section T. S., they are very properly so, because, in addition to the pleasure felt over the completion of another year in our corporate life, we have the satisfaction of knowing that that year has been one of healthy growth, of unusual privilege in the presence and work of two of the most eminent living Theosophists, and of rapid recuperation from the disaster of 1895. It is true, and no review would be accurate or fair which ignored the fact that Theosophy has been sadly confronted in its influence by the inevitable prejudice, even ridicule, which have been created in the public mind and the press by conspicuous burlesques of it. No dignified system of rational philosophy and spiritual teaching can escape opprobrium if its name is used by a contrary system of irrational sciolism and unspiritual pretence, and the opprobrium is made more certain if any palpable folly or transparent imposture or ludicrous claim is used in support. The incongruity of asserted truth and paraded falsehood is quickly discerned in an intelligent age, and a moral revolt turns away the truth-seeker from any and every system which, however rightfully bearing its name, has undergone the discrediting of the name through travesties of it by those outside. It is probably the fact that most movements of an ethical or religious character have had some such experience on their way; and human

nature and aims and artifices being as we know them, it can hardly cause surprise that Theosophy too should be subjected to just such an era. And yet, painful, saddening, disheartening even, as may be the spectacle to the sincere and the devout, there need be no doubt as to the final outcome. It is not in the nature of things that shams can permanently succeed. All the forces of God and Nature and Truth and Masters are against them; having no root in reality, they are doomed to wither as sunlight pours its beams around. And so we may confidently expect a time, possibly not remote, when delusions shall melt away, and sincere souls marvel that pretensions and absurdities, so transparent alike to reason and the moral sense, could ever have misled them.

In compensation for detriment to the Theosophic cause and obloquy to the Theosophic name, the American Section has been granted visit and labor from those two illustrious Theosophists who are happily with us to-day. It might not be delicate to here expatiate largely upon either their merit or our obligations, but it certainly would not be graceful or grateful to pass by the fact that in the past year the Countess Wachtmeister's work has added 12 Branches to our roll, and that in three months Mrs. Besant has added 6, besides a number of members-at-large, and that pure and undefiled Theosophy has been radiated forth in public and in private, suffusing the press and penetrating into countless minds. Such service at this epoch and under present conditions has a value which no one can compute, and if any one hesitates to call it "Providential" he can call it "Karmic" thus enjoying the assurance both that the Section has deserved it and that the service will be triumphant.

During the 14 months of the past Conventional year, there have been chartered the following 19 Branches:

NAME.	PLACE.	DATE.
Unity Lodge T. S. ....	Pasadena, Calif. ....	July 15, 1896
San Lorenzo T. S. ....	Santa Cruz, Calif. ....	Aug. 27, "
Ananda Lodge T. S. ....	Seattle, Wash. ....	Sept. 16, "
Olympus Lodge T. S. ....	Spokane, Wash. ....	Dec. 4, "
Butte Lodge T. S. ....	Butte, Montana Ter. ....	Dec. 14, "
Sheridan T. S. ....	Sheridan, Wyoming Ter. ....	Dec. 22, "
Yggdrasil T. S. ....	Minneapolis, Minn. ....	Jan. 25, 1897
Streator T. S. ....	Streator, Ill. ....	Feb. 19, "
Fidelity Lodge T. S. ....	Buffalo, N. Y. ....	Mar. 31, "
Englewood White Lodge T. S.	Chicago, Ill. ....	April 1, "
Mercury T. S. ....	Brooklyn, N. Y. ....	April 2, "
Cleveland T. S. ....	Cleveland, Ohio. ....	April 3, "
New York T. S. ....	New York, N. Y. ....	April 4, "
Washington T. S. ....	Washington, D. C. ....	April 13, "
Topeka T. S. ....	Topeka, Kansas. ....	April 29, "
Eastern Psychology T. S. ...	Chicago, Ill. ....	April 30, "
Manasa T. S. ....	Philadelphia, Pa. ....	May 1, "
First Newark Lodge T. S.	Newark, N. J. ....	May 24, "
Brotherhood T. S. ....	Denver, Colo. ....	May 27, "



In July, 1896, Dhyana T. S., Los Angeles, Calif., disbanded. In April of this year the Boise T. S., Boise City, Idaho Terr., formally surrendered its charter and expired. It had for a long time had an existence little more than on paper, and, in pursuance of that policy of reality which the American Section has always maintained, its candid extinction was advised by the General Secretary. The number of Branches is now 32.

The statistics for the 14 months are as follows: Members admitted, 405; restored, 44; resigned, 15; died, 3. Allowing for names dropped from the roll, the number of Branch members is 563; of members-at-large, 140; total, 703. The number last year was 281.

From the Report of the Treasurer you will perceive that the surplus on hand is \$675.63, that of last year being \$320.91. Our growing pecuniosity is due very largely to the fact that we are still free from the expense of office rent, the General Secretary's work being performed in his private quarters. It is probable that in this respect no change will soon become necessary, but the growing correspondence and other duty of the General Secretary's office have compelled a steadily increasing use of stenography, and I have lately been obliged to arrange, at a very moderate rate, for the services of a stenographer upon four days of each week. This will reduce our future accumulations, possibly even our present capital, but it is an outlay forced upon the office by the pressure of enlarging work, and has been urged by the Executive Committee as an imperative measure of relief.

In the circular announcing the meeting of Convention the General Secretary pointed out that the date fixed therefor by the Constitution is the 2d Sunday in June, which falls this year on the 13th day of the month, but that the exceeding importance of having with us at Convention the presence and counsel of Mrs. Besant, who could not possibly arrive before the 27th, had caused the Executive Committee, by unanimous vote, to instruct the General Secretary to announce the Convention for the latter date. Now the Committee have avowedly no power whatever to alter a Constitutional provision, but it was felt that the wish of every member of the Section without exception would be in favor of the change, and that a form should give way to a fact. In pursuance of the declared purpose of the Committee to ask the sanction of Convention for their step I submit and recommend for adoption the following Resolution:

RESOLVED, That this Convention fully concurs in and ratifies the action of the Executive Committee in postponing its meeting until the 27th of June, cordially approving the reason which prompted the postponement.

At this point there may well arise the question whether, in view of the possible occurrence of analogous or other contingencies in the future, it might not be well to so amend the Constitution as to leave the date of Convention, and not merely its place as now, in the hands of the Executive Committee. I have never been convinced myself that June was of necessity the best time, it is apt to be unduly warm, it is in a season when many persons have already left town, and the notion that travelling is then cheaper has never been conclusively proved. At all events, the plan of a more flexible date could be tried, and, if this should be the judgment of Convention, all that would be necessary is to strike out from Art. I.,

Section 5, the words, "on the second Sunday in June after 1896" and to insert after the word "such" the words "time and," the Section being thereby made to read, "The Council shall meet annually in Convention at such time and place as the Executive Committee may determine."

In order that the American Section might have part in the effort of Theosophists to assuage the terrible famine afflicting India, a circular was sent out in February inviting donations to the fund administered at Benares, and also for the relief of the Adyar Headquarters. The full amount received in response and remitted was \$215.00 for the Famine Fund, \$93.75 for Adyar.

There are four points connected with the General Secretary's office to which I should like to ask attention. The first is the payment of Branch dues. The Constitution provides that the Branch dues of \$1.00 for each member are payable January 1st, and not later than March 15th, yet in several cases these have only been paid at the end of April or the beginning of May, thus involving extra trouble to the office and some annoyance. The reason probably is that the dues of members to the Branch are not regularly collected at fixed times—semi-annual or quarterly being the best—but are allowed to accumulate until January and then demanded in a lump, the obligation to the General Secretary's office being thus made to take the chance of delay or loss. But, obviously, these obligations, being fully known in advance, should be provided for in advance, and anyhow the true system of collecting dues is by installments, they being small and more easily met. Thus collected, they are on hand for local needs and for Constitutional demands, and the latter can promptly be met early in the year, much to the convenience of the central office and to the comfort of the Branch itself.

The second point respects the *Vahan*. The Section is not financially strong enough to resume the issue of its old publication, *The Theosophical Forum* (only the issue, not the right, being in abeyance), and during the past year, as during its predecessor, the generous kindness of the General Secretary of the European Section, Mr. Mead, has supplied us with sufficient copies of the *Vahan* for each Branch Secretary and each member-at-large, thus furnishing all our members with discussions of important Theosophical topics by skilled writers—one, Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, of the highest rank—and informing them of the work done in our sister Section. But it did not seem just that the American Section, when at all able to do so, should fail to bear at least a part of the expense, and the Executive Committee authorized a contribution of \$50.00 thereto. Our growing numbers have required an enlargement of the supply, and our growing resources make proper a better contribution this year. I, therefore, recommend to the Convention the adoption of the following Resolution:

RESOLVED, That the General Secretary be empowered to transmit to the General Secretary of the European Section the sum of \$75.00, as some remuneration for the supply of the *VAHAN*.

The third point concerns a munificent contribution to our propaganda work, made by a most generous member of the Section. Early in Mrs. Besant's tour he went to the expense of reprinting her pamphlet, *What Theosophy Is*, and furnished 10,000 copies for distribution at her lectures. Later, he determined on a still more extensive outlay, and, adding to its

contents the *Epitome of Theosophy*, presented a further edition of 25,000. This enables both Branches and members-at-large to take part in the work of missionizing the community, and arrangements have been made to supply copies to all members who can usefully send them to persons likely to welcome and read them.

And this leads to the fourth point. A very important department of the former activities of the Section was the Propaganda Fund, a fund made up of donations throughout the Section and used by the General Secretary in furthering the spread of Theosophical doctrine and work. I am very anxious to re-establish this, not only on the general ground that such a resource is greatly needed and of utmost value, but specifically because of the large donation of pamphlets just mentioned and because Mrs. Besant's labors have opened to us opportunities of securing very valuable services from lecturers if we can pay their expenses. It is hardly possible for us to raise a sum sufficient to support a lecturer and keep him continually in the field, but we can certainly, if every member contributes, even through some self-sacrifice, accumulate enough to secure occasional trips and work. Each such tells. And if our members keep in mind the Propaganda Fund as a special channel for their help to Theosophical activity, we shall be able to spread truth and motive far and wide, sowing seed in countless fields, and forming centers which shall develop into full Branches as time goes on.

A word about MERCURY. Though improved in quality, and though carried on at great outlay of time and strength by its editor, it is not supported as it should be, being subscribed to, indeed, by but a small proportion of our members. And yet, I take it, our Sectional organ should be gladly ordered by every member who can afford \$1.00 a year, not considering whether he can borrow or otherwise see it, but subscribing as a direct help and as enabling him to circulate it among friends.

Every era has its particular trials and therefore its particular duties, and both the trials and the duties of the Theosophical Society and of this Section in this era stand clearly before us. They grow out of the specific work laid upon us of faithfully maintaining true Theosophy before the world and of portraying it publicly as it is. That is the work which Karma, the conditions of the time, the will of the Great Souls who stand behind and prompt all spiritual activities, have committed to us members of the Society. The history of all great movements shows that they succeed precisely as their adherents are single-minded, staunch, inflexible, yielding to no side-influences or compromising suggestions, clear-headed as to the truth contended for, and firm-willed as to the maintenance of it. Whenever there is doubt or imperception of that truth, the temptation inevitably arises to belittle its importance or to obscure it by magnifying lesser ones; and whenever there is relaxation of the purpose to maintain it, there starts up a disposition to compromise or postpone or sentimentalize. Where equal rights are concerned or where opposite opinions have equal legitimacy, compromise in human undertakings is often both seemly and salutary; but where the question is of morals, of assured facts, of demonstrated tendencies, compromise means abandonment of reality and hence success. No compromise is possible on the question whether the

three angles of a triangle are or are not equal to two right angles; and in the sphere of morals such is equally impossible on the question whether evil should be winked at or openly withstood. We may imagine that the right will be more surely vindicated if we cover it up and leave it to itself while we deploy emotions and maxims and attractive phrases; but just as the Physical Law brings to nought the calculations of him who supposes that a land survey may be conducted on the supposition that the three angles of a triangle equal a right angle and a half or two and a half, so the great Moral Law confounds in time the notion that Truth is maintained by concessions to error or that error itself is of no importance. To undergo such temptation seems particularly an experience of the time.

But the particular duty is also as palpable. It is that resolute, inflexible, persistent championship of fact and truth which is not only an obligation but the condition to triumph. Wavering, half-heartedness, concealment, suppression, timidity is not a mere mistake in morals; it is fatal as a policy. Karma ordains that men succeed as they deserve to succeed, and we shall deserve only as we adhere rigidly to those realities on which success is based.

So, in our maintenance and circulation of Theosophic doctrine, in our statement of facts as to Theosophic history and the vicissitudes of the T. S., in our accurate use of titles and terms and descriptive names, in our attitude to the T. S. and to all which opposes it, we have opportunity to perform the duty and secure the triumph. There is a glorious future for Theosophy in this land. Every year brings new evidence of its adaptation to the needs of intelligence, motive, spiritual desire. Its influence is more and more penetrating, influencing, moulding thought; its friends are multiplying in the circles alike of the cultivated and the lowly; its doctrines are exhibiting themselves in many a heart, and many a book, and many a life. To have been incarnated at such a time is a privilege, to contribute the force of that incarnation to such a cause is a glorious boon. Permeated with Theosophic truth and inspired by Theosophic motive, we may help forward the great currents which are sweeping over the land, and may ourselves be refreshed and strengthened by the same vitality which is to regenerate men and institutions and nations. If is not our lot to stride side by side with those illustrious visitors who have made Theosophy known and revered over the civilized world, and who both honor us with their presence and stimulate us with their words, we may at least follow in their steps, imitate their devotion, aid their work, and gather in their harvest. And when they and we alike shall have passed out for a time to other scenes and higher services, it may be with the hope—nay, with the anticipation—that all shall be reunited in later years, again to participate together in the same glorious mission, though with a world more suffused with Theosophy, an evolution upon a plane far richer and ennobling, a future of possibilities compared to which the present seem but poor and small and mean.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON, General Secretary.

Owing to pressure of matter, the CHILDREN'S CORNER must be postponed to next issue of MERCURY.



## LECTURE TOUR OF MRS. ANNIE BESANT.

TO THE EDITOR OF MERCURY:

June 4th—Puget Sound, with its fir and cedar-clothed hills guarded by isolated snow-capped peaks, is left behind us. We visited three towns upon its shores. At Tacoma, where two members of the Society met us in rather a hopeless state of mind about the prospects of Theosophy in their town, we only remained one full day, a very short time to start things when little work has already been done, but even in that time the town showed its readiness to respond to the truths of the Ancient Wisdom for Mrs. Besant's lecture was attended by the most thoughtful people in the place, and a group of its best citizens gathered around her on the night before she left. The seed was sown here as in so many other places, the future growth is in the hands of those who received it!

We passed on to Olympia early on Friday morning, and a very quiet day was spent in this little town, whose life ebbs and flows with the coming of the Judges to its Courthouse. The Countess knew one or two of the people who had been interested in Theosophy, but all was very quiet and Olympia only began to awaken after Mrs. Besant's evening lecture; amongst others, the Governor of the State attended and was afterwards presented. Much regret was expressed that we could not remain, but we had already arranged to take the 6:30 boat next morning and could not delay. In beautifully-situated and pure-aired Seattle we found a strong Lodge of the Society and much hopeful work progressing. This is one of the many Lodges who own their origin to the tireless energy of the Countess Wachtmister. It was only started last summer, but already has its lecture room and Library. Its President, Mr. Barnes, is a capable and devoted worker, and the Seattle Lodge promises to be a strong centre of Theosophic thought to the district.

Mrs. Besant gave three lectures in the Theatre to a full and deeply appreciative audience: "Theosophy and Its Teachings," "Man, the Maker of His Destiny," and "Thought Forms, a Glimpse of the Unseen Universe"—this last with the stereopticon presentations of the human aura and thought forms which, as I have before mentioned, do such good service in illustrating the facts about the invisible worlds and in making them comprehensible to the average man. The five days spent in Seattle passed swiftly, and much good work was done by Mrs. Besant in interviews and in meetings for the members and the public at the Society's rooms, and by the Countess, who lectured in West Seattle and formed there a group for study, the nucleus we will hope of a future Lodge.



Two members came over from Tacoma for the lectures and returned when we left with a better understanding of the real strength of the Theosophical Society and the important work that it has to do, and full of hope that by patient study and earnest practice they might do their part in the great whole.

One of the ideas here mooted by Mrs. Besant was a Federation of all the Lodges in the State of Washington, on the plan of the Northern Federation of England, for the purpose of interchange of Theosophical lectures and help in the work generally. This would mean meetings of the Lodges every six months in one or other of the federated towns, and it tends to foster outside interest and to promote a brotherly feeling by personal intercourse. Miss Ida Wright of Tacoma was asked by Mrs. Besant to be the Secretary *pro tem* for this scheme.

Each group of Lodges scattered over the wide area of the U. S. A. might adopt this plan with great advantage both to the members and to the work generally.

On leaving Chicago early in July the following towns are proposed to be visited, though the exact dates cannot yet be given: Streator, Clinton (Iowa), Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Cloud, Menomonie, Milwaukee, Detroit, Windsor, Toledo, Sandusky, Cleveland, Buffalo, Hamilton and Toronto. Any one of our members who has friends in either of these towns will do them a kindness by letting them know that we are coming, so that they can help in the work, or attend the lectures.

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June 19th.—From the Sound we went direct to Ellensburg, a small town interested chiefly in dairy farming. We were met by Mr. Ross, one of our members who had gladly undertaken the supervision of proceedings in the hope that his fellow townspeople might be sufficiently interested to form a Branch. On Friday evening, June 4th, Mrs. Besant lectured to a small audience in the Opera House and again the next afternoon. Here the people were remarkable for their unpunctuality and at the time the lecture was advertised to begin *two* people had arrived. This did not look promising, but Mr. Ross was quite cheerful and explained that it was the custom of the place to be late for everything. It certainly proved to be so, not only here, but at other towns also, whose inhabitants have evidently been spoilt by patiently waiting until the people decided to assemble. However, at last they came, and Mrs. Besant spoke clearly and eloquently upon the power of man over his own future, and the work of the Theosophical Society; and twice during our short stay, held her usual reception for enquirers. When we

left by the night train some new members had joined and enough were expected to come in to form a Branch there very shortly.

On we went to Spokane, a mining centre of importance, again to be met and driven to the hotel by members of the Society, who were overjoyed to have Mrs. Besant and the Countess amongst them to lecture and teach. The usual routine was followed, and Spokane distinguished itself by flocking in such crowds to the first lecture that some hundreds had to be turned away.

Butte in Montana came next, a desert of hills honey-combed by mines. We arrived there on Wednesday, June 9th, and the next day Mrs. Besant gave a splendid practical lecture to a good-sized audience, among whom were many miners. It created a very good impression in the town, as could be seen by the tone of the notices in the local papers; and many people joined the Society on our return from Anaconda, where Mrs. Besant spent one night, lectured, and formed a promising group for study.

From Butte it was only three hours to Helena, the last of our mining towns; we arrived at 1 o'clock on Sunday and found it quite a new field in regard to Theosophy, though a number of its inhabitants were more or less interested in various "occult" studies. Thanks to the kindness of Mr. Brown, the Unitarian minister, who gave up a lecture in a course he was giving and advertised Mrs. Besant's instead, we had a good audience at each of the two lectures. There is now one F. T. S. in Helena, as well as a group of people who intend to study with the view of ultimately forming a Lodge of the Society.

On Tuesday, June 15th, after a night on the train we found ourselves in Sheridan, Wyoming, near the home of Buffalo Bill and many of his Wild West riders. Here we encountered quite a distinct type of men from the miners amongst whom we had been lately working and it was a cheering sign that the young Lodge had already 30 members, with a few amongst them of the earnest type that ensures the success of any movement they are connected with.

Mrs. Besant held several talks at Coffeen's Hall and gave two fairly attended lectures in the Opera House. Three people joined the Lodge, and we hope that some of the scattered ranchers carried back to their homes Theosophical ideas to work into their daily lives.

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LOS ANGELES, CAL., June 10.—Since my last report, giving a brief account of Mrs. Besant's work here, Harmony Lodge T. S. has settled down to ordinary routine work again. Owing to increase of membership, it has

been found necessary to hold tri-weekly evening meetings, a lecture Sunday, the regular Branch meeting Wednesday, at which the "Seven Principles" is now being studied, and a Secret Doctrine Class Friday. Two weeks ago a Book Social was given by the ladies of the Lodge, which, besides being very effective in bringing new and old members into closer relationship, also provided considerable funds towards buying new books for the Library. Among the Sunday evening lectures last month may be mentioned "Clairvoyance," by Mr. J. H. M. Lapsley and "The Greatness of the Minute," by Dr. E. D. Babbitt, author of "Principles of Light and Color," and other scientific books too well known to need any comment. Dr. Babbitt is now Principal of the College of Finer Forces in the city. Next week Miss Marie A. Walsh is expected, whom we hope to keep with us for some time.

H. R., Sec'y Harmony Lodge T. S.

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PASADENA, CAL., June 21st.—Unity Lodge T. S. held its first annual meeting last evening at the new headquarters on North Raymond avenue. The meeting was well attended. On election of officers for the ensuing year, by unanimous voice Frank T. Merritt was re-elected President, Mrs. M. Maxwell, Vice-President, and Mrs. S. E. Merritt, Secretary and Treasurer. Our Lodge was organized one year ago with eight charter members, we now number 17. Books for sale, and a Lending Library has been started by Mrs. Maxwell which prove an attractive feature at headquarters. Mrs. Besant lectured here on May 5th; met with the Lodge members at noon the next day, and held a public reception in the afternoon at the "Carlton." Many people from here attended her lectures in Los Angeles. A committee is appointed to arrange with Miss Walsh for lectures during her stay in Los Angeles. The Countess Wachtmeister will represent us at the coming Convention. MRS. S. E. MERRITT,  
Secretary.

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CHICAGO, ILL., June 19th—Chicago Branch Theosophical Society.—Count Axel Wachtmeister arrived last week, and lectured Sunday afternoon, June 13th, before The Eastern Psychology Lodge, Englewood. He has been quite busy this week preparing for Mrs. Besant's arrival and lectures, and on Sunday evening, June 20th, will lecture at our rooms on "Dreams." Countess Wachtmeister will arrive Monday, Mr. Alexander Fullerton, General Secretary, is due Wednesday next, and Mrs. Besant on Friday; while other delegates to our Annual Convention of the American Section of the Theosophical Society on Sunday, June 27th, will arrive during the coming week. The Third Volume of the *Secret Doctrine*

was issued on Monday, the 14th, and is finely printed and bound, uniform with Volumes 1 and 2, and its sale will doubtless be very large, dealing as it does with "Occultism." The interest in the Convention is quite marked, as well as in the lectures of Mrs. Besant, whose stay with us is looked forward to with special interest. We were much pleased with MERCURY for June, and especially the beautiful pictures of Mrs. Besant and Countess Wachtmeister therein. On Saturday evening, June 26th, a Reception will be given to Mrs. Annie Besant, Countess Wachtmeister, and the other delegates to the Convention. On Sunday morning, at 10 o'clock, the Convention will meet, and the evening session will be held at Steinway Hall, to which the public will be invited, and at which Mrs. Besant and others will speak. On Monday evening, June 28th, Mrs. Besant will deliver her first public lecture, at Central Music Hall, to be followed by others during her stay. *The New Unity*, a weekly publication in this city, in the interest of the Liberal Religious Movement, has for several weeks published some very interesting articles on the lines of Theosophical thought, written by our worthy President, Mr. George C. Wright, entitled "On the Outer Rim," which will soon appear in book form.

ISABEL M. STEVENS,

Sec'y Chicago Branch.

NEW YORK, June 2d.—A Branch was formed here during the recent visit of Mrs. Besant and chartered as the "New York T. S.," with 20 charter members. The preliminary meetings were held in the parlors of Mrs. A. M. Rickey, 1244 Broadway, who most kindly offered the use of her rooms; permanent quarters have been secured in the lecture hall of the American Institute of Phrenology, No. 27 East 21st street, where meetings are now held weekly on Friday evenings. The first meeting in the new quarters was held May 7th, when Mr. Fullerton gave a short address; on the 14th, Swami Saradanda lectured on "Reincarnation as taught by the Vedanta Philosophy" before an audience of about 100, and on the 21st Prof. Lockwood lectured on "Thought Transference" to about the same number. The reading of Mrs. Besant's Manual "Man and His Bodies," is now occupying the attention of the Branch and is the occasion of much interesting discussion. The officers of the Branch are Frederic W. Leonard, President; Mrs. Adele M. Rickey, Vice-President, and T. B. Clatworthy, Secretary and Treasurer.

Fraternally yours,

T. B. CLATWORTHY,  
Secretary.

SEATTLE, WASH., June 11.—Ananda Lodge has made great progress during the month. Our Lodgeroom has been enlarged to accommodate the large audiences gathered to hear Mrs. Besant. Fifteen new members have been added to our list. Mrs. Besant and the Countess Wachtmeister arrived in Seattle on Saturday, May 29th. A reception was given them on that evening at the Lodgeroom. This was a most delightful occasion, the members and about 100 of their friends were gathered to hear Mrs. Besant speak of the progress of Theosophy throughout the world, and of how we could bring these truths to the attention of people by helping them to recognize and practice the truths in their own religion and showing them that Theosophy contains the essence of all religions. On Sunday afternoon Mrs. Besant gave a talk to the members only and on Sunday evening she lectured on "Man, the Master of His Destiny" to a large audience in the Opera House. On Monday afternoon she lectured again on "Life after Death," and that evening and Tuesday afternoon were given to answering questions in the Lodgeroom. On Tuesday evening the lecture was on "Man's Invisible Bodies." On Wednesday afternoon the Countess Wachtmeister held a parlor meeting in West Seattle; there were 30 persons present and much interest manifested. Regular weekly meetings were arranged there. Thus the good work is spreading. On Wednesday evening at 7 o'clock there was a private talk to new members; an hour later another large audience gathered to hear Mrs. Besant answer questions. The Lodge has been greatly encouraged and strengthened by the visit of Mrs. Besant and the Countess Wachtmeister, and we feel that a grand influence has gone forth in the community.

HARRIET C. STEIN, Sec'y.

PORTLAND, OR.—The last year has been one of considerable progress for the Willamette Branch, T. S. Our membership has more than doubled, and the Branch has now comfortable Headquarters, well furnished, and our limited number of books contains some of the best and most important Theosophical works. Our meetings are well attended, and the prospects for a larger membership, and greater activity are more than good. During the month of September, 1896, Countess Wachtmeister visited Portland on her lecturing tour, and during last May Mrs. Annie Besant, Countess Wachtmeister and Miss Willson visited this city, Mrs. Besant delivering three lectures to good audiences. Both of these lecturing tours have done much good for the Theosophical movement in general, and the Willamette Branch in particular. There is one thing that each of us must remember, the task before us is one that presents many difficulties due chiefly, if not entirely, to the strange turn which



some have given the Theosophical movement of late. It is grievous to think that there are people who, while continually talking about Universal Brotherhood, nevertheless broke away from us, setting up a rival faction while retaining the name of the organization from which they were led away, and thus creating confusion, mistrust and otherwise alienating so many that would have joined us in the work of Theosophical activity. This, it would seem, is altogether too great an obstacle to overcome, and those who are responsible for this condition of affairs ought to begin to realize the full significance of such action on their part, and retrace their steps as speedily as possible. Although this is the individual opinion of the writer, yet he is satisfied that every earnest Theosophist who is free from the blight faction and dogmatism will not hesitate to endorse it.

WILLIAM H. GALVANI,  
Sec'y Willamette Branch, T. S.

AUSTRALASIAN SECTION T. S., June 7th. — The activity in this Section is receiving great assistance from the presence in it of Miss L. Edger, M. A., General Secretary of New Zealand, who is delivering a series of lectures to the various Branches. It is expected her tour will last about three months. Large and appreciative audiences have attended her lectures, so far in each centre she has visited, and it is hoped much good will result. On other lines the work is going along quietly and steadily "without haste, but without rest," and gives us a feeling of confidence that presently we shall have much more to report.

H. A. WILSON,  
Assistant Secretary.

### Official Notice

#### EDITOR OF MERCURY:

Mr. Peter de Abrew writes warmly of the munificent donation in buildings to the Musceus School at Colombo, Ceylon, by Mr. Wilton Hack, and asks that American Theosophist contribute to the support of the new pupils which these additional buildings make possible. I shall, as heretofore, be most glad to transmit any donations sent to me for that purpose.

Mrs. Higgins' years of labor have told upon her, and the increasing work of the School forces her to search for an Assistant, a qualified teacher, familiar with housekeeping, between 25 and 40 years of age, willing from love of the work to do it without salary and with only a bare support. Mr. de Abrew thinks that such a volunteer may be found in the American Section.

5 University Place, New York.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON.

## BOOK REVIEWS.

THEOSOPHIST, June.—If the thing is possible the old "Diary Leaves" Chap. 3, of 2 Oriental Series, are growing more interesting than ever; the present installment contains much about the beginning of Damodar's psychic growth and about astral communications from the Masters, well authenticated by corresponding telegrams. Col. Olcott concludes with remarks made at the time by the Masters, who pointedly said that their "blessings follow the suffering Founders of the T. S. and ALL WHO HELP on their work," meaning those faithful to H. P. B. and her surviving colleague. The other articles are a translation from the Swedish on "Character;" the conclusion of N. F. Bilimoria's weird article on the "Plague and its Causes;" a suggestion on "The Union of the Three Buddhist Nations;" a very interesting lecture made by K. N. Aiyer, before the lively and hard working lodge of Kumbakonam on "The Prophetic Character of H. P. B.," something on the lines of the "Scientific Corroborations;" a study on the "Days of the Week" and their occult correspondences by one of the hard-working writers of MERCURY, Dr. A. Marques; a mystical note on "Mlle Couedon et les Propheties Modernes," pleasing to those who are expecting some gruesome end of the cycle; "Hawaiian Folk Lore," a first installment of Polynesian mythology; and a curious chapter on "Symbology of Astrology;" making with the Echoes and Reviews, a rich, varied and very interesting number.

LUCIFER, June.—We miss the "Watch Tower," whose paragraphs are often very interesting portions; and as truth ought to be told to friends, we think that LUCIFER has an undesirable growing tendency to become too ponderous, monotonous, with too much rhetorical, academical stiffness, and too little of real practical information. This number is unusually heavy, the brightest articles being Mrs Besant's "Reincarnation," (continued), Mr. Leadbeater's "Akâshic Records" and "A Link in the Chain," by B. Keightly, showing through an old and unknown German pamphlet that attempts had been made during last century, by the White Lodge, to propagate the Theosophical doctrines, as asserted by H. P. B. The other contributions are a continuation of Mead's "Among the Gnostics," the "World's Fairy Lore," by Mrs. Hooper," a continuation of W. C. Ward's "Phædo of Plato," "Authority," by Miss Ward, and "Activities and Reviews."

SOPHIA, June, is made up entirely of translations, four articles from the English, "Devachan," by Leadbeater; "Letters to a Catholic Priest," A. A. Wells; "The Sankya Philosophy," B. Keightley, and "Studies on Buddhism," Siunett; and one from the French, "Historical Varieties," by Philadelph. With this number is sent the second part of the translated STORY OF ATLANTIS.

INTELLIGENCE, June No. 1.—This is the METAPHYSICAL MAGAZINE in new form and reduced in price to \$1 a year, but with the same program as heretofore. It contains "Man and Nature," by C. S. Wake; "Modern Astrology," a short study on astrological symbolism, by Alan Leo of the London MODERN ASTROLOGY; a first installment of the "Philosophy of the Divine Man," by Hudor Genone; the 22d chapter of a delicious study on "Mazdaism and Being," by the prince of American mystics, Prof. C. H. A. Bjerregaard; a first chapter on "Bhagavad Gîtâ" by Charles Johnston; "Esoteric Puritanism," by Henrietta C. Wright; "Leaves from a Metaphysian's Diary, a rather ambitious title for a "Summer Idyl," by H. M. North; a poem on "Occultism," by J. F. Morton, Jr., and the usual chapter on the "World of Thought." As a whole, the number is very creditable and the intention of

putting good metaphysical reading within the reach of the humblest reader is well worthy of support.

NOVA LUX, Rome, May.—This number contains a continuation of D. Calvari's excellent study on the "Ego and his Vehicles," based on A. Besant's "Self and its Sheaths" and "Man and his Bodies." Under the title of "Idealism and Materialism" Dr. L. de Vinculis, whose name seems to fore-ordain him to be fettered by materialistic tendencies, is allowed "in homage to the liberty of thought," to eulogize some of the worst ideas of the German materialistic school. V. Cavalli continues his interesting review of "Obscure Points in Spiritism," and the other contributions are more directly connected with the secret order of MARTINISM, of which NOVA LUX is one of the official organs.

"LECTURES ON THE STUDY OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA," by T. Subba Row, edited in a handy and compact form—companion to the pocket edition of the BHAGAVAD GITA—by the ever active Bombay Theosophical Publication Fund. These lectures were originally published in the THEOSOPHIST, reprinted in the collection of Subbarao's "Esoteric Writings," and also issued separately by Mr. Tookaram Tatya under the title of "Discourses on the Bhagavad Gita." These invaluable instructions have been found the most useful document ever published as a help to students of Vyasa's philosophy and they contain the most occult teachints available, so that it is unnecessary to congratulate the publishers about the good work done by them, by placing them within easier reach of the public. The value of the volume is further enhanced by an appendix containing a controversy raised on the peculiar meaning given by Subbaro to a Sanscrit work, Avyaktan, which he took as identical with Mulaprakriti; and through this controversy we gain a further insight into the Hindu philosophies.

BHAGAVAD GITA.—Received from the Madrid Branch a new translation gratefully dedicated to H. P. B. by Senor J. Roviralta Borrell, printed in Barcelona. Outside of a version of Judge's edition, made for the U. S., and another published in Buenos Ayres, this is the first effort to present the noted Indian Epic in pure Castilian, and the author must be congratulated on the excellency of his work. Although not a direct translation from the Sanscrit, it seems very free from the defects which generally accompany translations of translations, for the reason that it has evidently been a labor of love, and Mr. Borrell has taken great pains in consulting and comparing all the known French and English versions. Apart from a very interesting introduction in which the author tries to unravel the mysterious signification of the Kurus and Pandavas, and apart from a short glossary, giving excellent explanation of the principal technical expressions of Hindu mysticism, the work is accompanied by numerous foot-notes elucidating difficult passages or various interpretations; and in this, Mr. Borrell, appears, not without reason in our humble appreciation, to have given preference to Chatterji's, valuable commentaries. The typographical part is quite creditable, and the whole makes a valuable acquisition to the Castilian literature.

A M.

LE LOTUS BLEU, May.—This number gives 16 pages of the SECRET DOCTRINE. Other translations are "The Body of Desire," by B. Keightley, and "Our Invisible Helpers," (continued) Mr. Leadbeater. D. A. Courmes writes on the "End of a Cycle." He makes the minor sub-cycle of the Kali Yuga to end April 12, 1899. "Under the Bodhi Tree," by Luxame (concluded). This paper treats of the illusiveness of the external world: "Human life demands for its existence a condition of change, of transformaion, of progress."

The revolt of the soul against this illusion is the beginning of life spiritual. "Holy effort, child of Will, is the 'Open Sesame' to Emancipation." "Reincarnation," under this title appears an epitaph on Benjamin Franklin, written by himself, in which the belief in reincarnation is quaintly expressed.

DENVER COL., sends us the first number of a monthly magazine entitled TEMPLE. Each number is to be complete in itself. The first is "Bodily Immortality," by Paul Tynem, full of strong, helpful, uplifting thoughts. We quote the following: "If oneness with God means anything, it means oneness with man! If oneness with man means anything, it means that . . . while a single human soul is starved physically, mentally or spiritually, I am starved." "Other-world religion and the saving of the soul beyond the grave have had their day. It is time that we should have a this-world, and this-life, a this-body and this-time—a here and a now religion."

THE THEOSOPHIC GLEANER, May.—"Gaiyomard and Zarathushtra," "Invisible Helpers or Guardian Angels," "The Future of the Physical Science," "Sayings of Rama Kreshna Paramhansa," "Reincarnation," "The Electric Eye," "Crime and Telepathy," "Obiter Dicta."

MAHA-BODHI JOURNAL, May.—"Notes and News," "Attainment of Bodhi-Gyaha," "The Buddhist View of Relics," "A Summary of Buddhism," "Is there more than one Buddhism?," "Indian Famine Appeal," "The Philosophy of Buddhism," "Correspondence."

THE EXODUS, June.—"The Evolution of Evolution," "Still Higher Criticism," "International Bible Lessons," "The Mastery of Fate," "The Breath of Life," Editorial.

THE VEGETARIAN COOK BOOK, edited by Mrs. Kate Buffington Davis and Countess Wachtmeister, is now ready, and will be reviewed in August number of MERCURY.

SECRET DOCTRINE, by H. P. B., the Third and long-delayed Volume, has at last been completed and will be reviewed shortly. Orders for the Volume are received at the MERCURY OFFICE.

Received: THE WORLD'S ADVANCED THOUGHT.

## NOTICE

Count Axel Wachtmeister, who kindly assumed temporarily the Editorship of MERCURY during my absence in Europe, having now resigned those duties, all correspondence should be addressed to me as before, Room 6, Native Sons' Building, 414 Mason St., San Francisco, Cal.

W. J. WALTERS.

The August number of MERCURY will contain the following articles: "Scientific Corroborations of Theosophy," by Prof. Mackenzie, and "A Theosophical Idea of Heaven," by Mr. T. A. Titus; both were unfortunately crowded out this month.